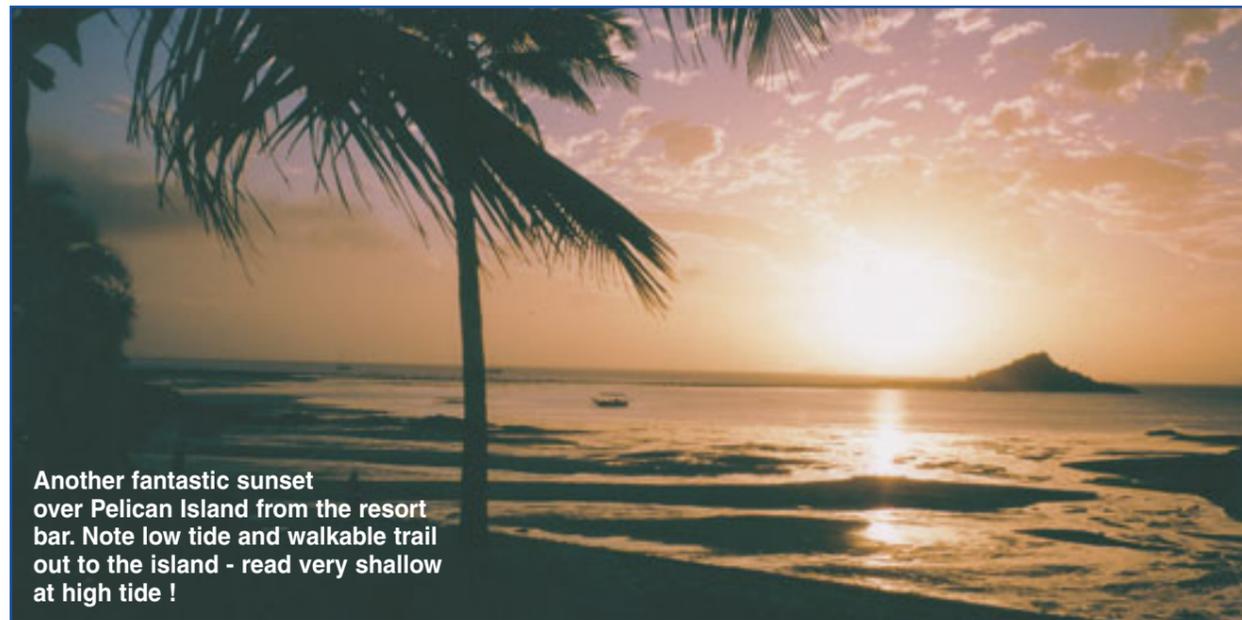


Brampton Island

Story & Pics by Darren Shiel

Darren Shiel has a special affinity for Brampton Island (off Mackay, Qld) because he was based on the island for 12 months as a water sports organiser for the resort - meaning he had to work with the fishing, diving, sailing, babes, sailboarding, jet skis and babes. We suspect he only left through the sheer exhaustion of looking after so many lonely tourists!



Another fantastic sunset over Pelican Island from the resort bar. Note low tide and walkable trail out to the island - read very shallow at high tide!

A trailer boating holiday would easily have to be the hardest of any to organize. It's not only the boat and tow vehicle that need to be prepared, which in itself is a huge job, but it is also the planning and research that goes into holidaying in a new area.

You not only have the usual planning of where to stay and what to do, but also the research of the dangers you may be facing. In all my experience however, the effort is seriously worth it.

After reading *Fisherman & Boatowner* magazine since its inception many years ago, Peter and Ruth have successfully inspired me to become a trailer

boating holiday junkie. I was the owner of the *Seafarer Venus* as featured in F&B issue #75, and now of the *Hydrofield Jaguar* as featured in issue #85. I have enjoyed many fine holidays with these vessels, from the mid-north coast of NSW (Yamba), north up to the Whitsunday islands, and many beautiful destinations in between.

Now I don't care how easy it is for Peter and Ruth, but as far as I am concerned, towing a trailer boat over a long distance is not the most relaxing thing in the world, no matter how well the boat-motor-trailer package is set up.

Based on Queensland's Gold Coast, I have always

chosen destinations within around 14 hours drive at the most (with a boat), so as to not use up all my holidays driving. If I had a larger boat, I would probably opt to have it put on a truck or train, and made ready at my destination, when I arrive.

The most beautiful destination, and subject of this story, is the Whitsunday region.

Because the Whitsunday region covers a huge area (around 100 nautical miles), between Bowen and Mackay, it would be an injustice to try to cover the whole area in a single report. For this reason I will only concentrate on a relatively small area in the southern section.

This southern section covers probably my favourite destination – Mackay. Around 1100km north of Brisbane, or around 14 hours drive at comfortable towing speeds, Mackay is a great base for any trailer boating holiday.

The roads from Brisbane are generally quite good, with 100/110km/h limits (if you can maintain that), dual lanes until the northern Sunshine Coast, and then single lane for the rest of the trip.

The roads are all quite level, and easy towing for a decent set up. You need to conscientiously remember to drop your speed through the various towns on the way, because there is a high



Chart reproduced by the kind permission of the publisher of "100 Magic Miles" the beautiful publication that is the 'bible' for cruising in the Whitsundays. The seventh edition of this 256 page tome has just been released, and is available from good book shops everywhere - and specifically, from any of the "Boat Books" branches.